

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 0069

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR RH ZA
SUBJ: COMMENTS ON FRONTLINE RECOGNITION OF PATRIOTIC FRONT

1. THREE MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS MAY HAVE LED THE FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS TO RECOGNIZE THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. THESE ARE: A) THE THREAT POSED BY THE FORMATION OF ZUPO WITH SMITH'S BACKING. THE FRONTLINE LEADERS READ THIS STEP AS AN INDICATION THAT SMITH MIGHT TRY EITHER TO PRESS FOR ZUPO'S REPRESENTATION AT GENEVA OR TO IMPLEMENT THE FIVE POINTS WITH ZUPO, POSSIBLY EXPANDED TO INCLUDE MUZOREWA. THE FRONTLINE BELIEVED THAT THIS WAS A SERIOUS POSSIBILITY AND THAT ONE EFFECTIVE WAY OF FORESTALLING IT WOULD BE TO GIVE ITS FULL RECOGNITION TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. WITH FRONTLINE AND ULTIMATELY AFRICAN AND FULL INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE PF, THEY BELIEVED IT WOULD ENABLE THEM TO BLOCK ANY SEPARATE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATED BY SMITH WITH ANY OTHER GROUP. B) A MEETING OF THE OAU LIBERATION COMMITTEE IN LUSAKA IS SCHEDULED FOR LATE JANUARY AND COULD HAVE PRODUCED DIVISIONS
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AMONG AFRICAN MEMBERS IN TERMS OF THEIR SUPPORT FOR VARIOUS NATIONALIST ORGANIZATIONS. THUS IT MIGHT HAVE PAVED THE WAY TO A REPETITION OF THE EMBARRASSMENT OF ANGOLA WHERE THE OAU WAS BITTERLY DIVIDED ON AN AFRICAN PROBLEM. IT SEEMS HIGHLY LIKELY THAT THE LIBERATION COMMITTEE WILL FOLLOW THE FRONTLINE LEAD, WITHDRAW OAU RECOGNITION OF THE ANC AND BESTOW IT ON THE PF. C) CONTINUED UNCERTAINTY OVER WHO HAD FIRST CLAIM TO SPEAK FOR

AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE AFFORDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE SOVIETS, THE CHINESE, AND PERHAPS WESTERN COUNTRIES TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THE RIVALRY AMONG THE NATIONALISTS. THIS DANGER WAS MADE MORE IMMINENT BY THE PODGORNÝ VISIT PROJECTED FOR MARCH. THUS THE FRONTLINE SAW ITS ACTION AS PRECLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF DIVISION AMONG THE AFRICANS AND FOREIGN INTERVENTION IN AN ANGOLAN PATTERN.

2. SELECTION OF THE PF ALSO UNITED THE FRONTLINE MORE STRONGLY THAN IT HAS EVER BEEN IN THE PAST. IT GAVE EACH OF THE MEMBERS ESSENTIALLY WHAT IT WAS LOOKING FOR IN A POST-INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE GOVT: TO KAUNDA, NKOMO'S PREDOMINANCE; TO NYERERE, A DECISIVE VOICE AND INFLUENCE; TO MACHEL, ASSURANCE OF AT LEAST A RADICAL, REVOLUTIONARY TINGE TO THE DOMINANT GROUP WHICH MIGHT EVENTUALLY TAKE OVER THE GOVT. NEITHER ANGOLA NOR BOTSWANA WAS IN A POSITION TO OBJECT STRONGLY TO THESE CONSIDERATIONS.

3. AN ELABORATE RATIONALE IS BEING WORKED OUT FOR THE FRONTLINE ACTION. PRES KAUNDA LAID OUT SOME OF THE BACKGROUND FOR IT IN HIS SPEECH TO PARLIAMENT THE FRIDAY BEFORE THE FRONTLINE MEETING. HE STRESSED THAT IT WAS PRESSURE FROM FREEDOM FIGHTERS WHICH HAD CAUSED THE US AND UK TO TAKE INITIATIVES WHICH LED TO THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. NYERERE ECHOED THE SAME THOUGHTS IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING THE MEETING. THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR GENEVA SINCE THEY GALVANIZED THE US AND UK INTO ACTION. THE OAU AND FRONTLINE HAD RECOGNIZED THIS BY THEIR SUPPORT FOR ZIPA. IT WAS ONLY NATURAL, THEREFORE, THAT THAT SUPPORT SHOULD EXTEND TO ZIPA'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. THE FRONT AND ITS MILITARY FORCES WERE NOT ONLY

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RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROGRESS IN BRINGING GENEVA ABOUT BUT ALSO WOULD INEVITABLY PROVIDE THE STRUCTURE AND ORDER OF AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE. FONMIN MWALE ADDED THE THOUGHT THAT A "PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT" IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE. WAR HAS ALREADY BEGUN. NOW WE CAN ONLY DISCUSS A "NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT". THESE NEGOTIATIONS INVOLVE THE WARRING PARTIES WHICH, ON THE SIDE OF THE NATIONALISTS, MEANS ZIPA AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT.

4. THE FRONTLINE ACTION IS LIKELY TO DEPRIVE MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE OF INTERNATIONAL AND DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT AND PROBABLY MOST MAJOR SOURCES OF FUNDS. IT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE SOME AFFECT ON THE SUPPORT WITHIN ZIMBABWE OF THESE TWO LEADERS. THE FRONTLINE IS CONFIDENT THAT THERE HAVE ALREADY BEEN SIGNIFICANT DEFECTIONS FROM MUZOREWA'S DELEGATION (ONE SOURCE COUNTED ELEVEN) AND THAT ITS ACTION WILL ENCOURAGE MORE. IT APPEARS WILLING TO IGNORE MUZOREWA'S DEMONSTRATED POPULARITY INSIDE ZIMBABWE IN THE CONVICTION THAT ITS LEAD AND HIS INEPTITUDE WILL SOON DESTROY WHATEVER IS LEFT OF HIS ORGANIZATION OR THAT ANY GOVT WHICH WAS FORMED WITH HIM COULD BE TREATED LIKE TRANSKEI. THE DANGER OF COURSE

IS THAT THEY MAY BE WRONG, AND THAT MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE, CUT OFF FROM EXTERNAL AFRICAN SUPPORT, WILL TAKE THE ONLY ROAD LEFT OPEN TO THEM WHICH IS NEGOTIATION WITH SMITH ON THE BASIS OF A MODIFIED FIVE POINTS. THIS COULD PLAY DIRECTLY INTO SMITH'S HANDS GIVEN HIS PRESENT APPARENTLY TRUCULENT MOOD. CERTAINLY THE PROMINENT ROLE BEING PLAYED BY MUGABE IN THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WILL NOT INCLINE SMITH TO WANT TO NEGOTIATE FURTHER WITH IT.

5. THE RESULT, THEREFORE, OF THE FRONTLINE ACTION MAY HAVE BEEN TO AVOID AN ANGOLA-TYPE SITUATION BUT IT MAY ALSO RESULT IN A POLARIZATION OF THE RHODESIAN NEGOTIATIONS WHICH WILL MAKE EARLY SETTLEMENT MORE DIFFICULT. LOW

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